ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A pellet-shaped article inspection unit is structured for use with a conveyer mechanism having a plurality of carrier bars, each carrier bar being structured to convey a plurality of pellet-shaped articles along a predetermined path. The article inspection unit includes a first camera unit positioned adjacent a first side of the conveyer mechanism. The first camera unit is configured to sense a first predetermined characteristic, e.g., laser holes, of the plurality of pellet-shaped articles. A removal mechanism, downstream from the first camera unit, is structured to remove or maintain at least a selected one of the plurality of pellet-shaped articles from at least a selected one of the plurality of carrier bars depending on whether the first predetermined characteristic is sensed by the first camera unit. A laser unit may be provided to create unique holes in the pellet-shaped articles, e.g., those by a larger exposed surface to improve time-release characteristics of the pellet-shaped articles.